



Irish Writers Centre Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
and Welfare Policy 2023

Table of Contents

Irish Writers Centre Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy	3
Code of Good Practice for IWC staff, volunteers, interns and artists	4
Recruiting and Selecting Staff and Volunteers	7
Staff Management Policy.....	8
Designated Liaison Person.....	8
Role of the Designated Liaison Person	9
Mandated Persons	9
Confidentiality Statement	10
Rules to guide use of photography and video	11
IWC Procedure for Reporting - Safeguarding Children	12
Procedure for Dealing with Concerns / Suspicion of Abuse.....	12
Reasonable Grounds for Concern	13
Procedure for Dealing with a Disclosure or Allegation	13
Reporting Procedure	14
Out-of-hours Emergencies	15
Dealing with Allegations	15
Dealing with a Retrospective Allegation	16
IWC Procedure for Reporting – Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults	17
Complaints Procedure.....	20
Accidents Procedure	21
Appendix 1.a IWC Child Incident Report Form.....	22
Appendix 1.b IWC Incident Report Form	23
Appendix Two – IWC Volunteer, Staff, Intern, Instructor Declaration	24
Appendix Three – IWC Parental Consent Form.....	27
References.....	29

Irish Writers Centre Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy

The Irish Writers Centre (IWC) is committed to an individual focus and best practice approach to our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is central to the philosophy of the IWC that all children, young people, vulnerable adults, staff members, volunteers, interns, artists, members and service users are unconditionally respected and kept safe from harm while using our services. Our normal practices and behaviour actively promote delivery of excellent services to writers of all ages as individuals in a safe and engaging environment, where the welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount.

We will adhere to the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017) and the Children First Act 2015, by having and implementing child protection policies and procedures. We also adhere to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse, published by the Health Service Executive.

There is an obligation to anyone who is involved with children and vulnerable adults to provide them with the highest possible standard of care. Those who accept responsibility for children and vulnerable adults may be legally responsible for their failure to provide adequate care. Therefore, there is a two-fold benefit in the proper implementation of these policies: firstly the protection of the child and the vulnerable adult and secondly, the protection of the IWC.

Per the Child Care Act 1991, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married. This definition includes the term young people.

A vulnerable person is defined as an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. The restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment.

Vulnerability to abuse is influenced by both context (e.g. social or personal circumstances) and individual circumstances.¹

¹ Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, FAQ, December 2014, p.1

In order to ensure mutual protection, staff, volunteers, interns and artists and other organisations working with the IWC will be made familiar with our IWC Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures, Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety guidelines in relation to participation in children and young people's activities. We have implemented procedures covering:

- Code of behaviour for all staff members, volunteers, interns or artists
- Confidentiality
- Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- Management and supervision of staff, volunteers and interns
- Involvement of primary carers
- Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff member, volunteer, intern or artist
- Complaints and comments
- Incidents and accidents

For any information about the IWC's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures, please contact Orla Martin, Administrator and Designated Liaison Person in line with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017):

Email info@writerscentre.ie Tel 01 8721302

Code of Good Practice for IWC staff, volunteers, interns and artists

By adhering to this Code of Good Practice, staff, volunteers, interns and artists can ensure that our events will be safe and educational for all participants, while those undertaking roles within our organisation will be protected.

Good Practice at the IWC means:

- putting the child and vulnerable adult's welfare, safety and enjoyment first
- treating all young and vulnerable people equally, and with respect and dignity
- making our activities educational, fun and enjoyable (online or in our building)

- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers children and vulnerable adults to share the decision-making process
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback
- using appropriate language (physical and verbal), tempering language to the needs and sensitivity of the child or vulnerable adult present
- challenging use of inappropriate language by children and adults
- planning and preparing appropriately so that each session suits the needs of the group (e.g. activities are age appropriate and allow each child to participate in an enjoyable way)
- always working in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging said open environment
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and vulnerable adults
- ensuring that manual or physical support is only provided when relevant and necessary, except in emergency situations. Children and vulnerable adults should always be consulted and their agreement gained before any physical contact takes place
- involving parents/carers wherever possible and keeping them informed of any issues that concern their children
- ensuring that all children under seven years of age are accompanied to IWC events by a parent or carer (online or in our building)
- maintaining accurate policies and procedures in relation to the care of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- keeping a written record of any injury or incident that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given including bringing forms and a copy of this policy to all IWC events
- requesting written parental consent if IWC staff members are required to transport a child, young person or vulnerable adult in their cars

It is important that all IWC staff, volunteers, interns and artists follow this Code of Good Practice. By keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults at the forefront of our planning and practice, we can be confident that these participants will enjoy their experiences

and that our actions will be regarded as safe. In addition staff, volunteers, interns and artists must never:

- Exert undue influence over a young or vulnerable participant in order to gain personal benefit or reward.
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Leave children or vulnerable adults alone or unsupervised.
- Engage in rough contact, sexually provocative games, inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Engage in a sexual relationship with a young person or vulnerable adult. This is considered a very serious breach of trust and a disciplinary matter. If the young person is below the age of consent it may be illegal and hence a criminal matter.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young person or vulnerable adult.

Following any incident where staff, volunteer, intern or artists feels their actions could be misinterpreted, a written report should be submitted to IWC's Designated Liaison Person.

Recruiting and Selecting Staff and Volunteers

The IWC will recruit and select volunteers and staff in a transparent and equitable fashion and recognises that anyone may have the potential to harm children so we take steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

We ensure that staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised by observing the following actions.

- Roles and responsibilities are defined
- Posts are advertised
- All candidates complete an application form. The application form elicits information about the applicant's past and includes a self-disclosure about any criminal record. All IWC staff are Garda Vetted, in accordance with our Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and the Children First Act 2015.
- Staff are selected by a panel of at least two (or more) representatives through an interview process.
- At least two confidential references which are relevant, recent and independent will be sought and verbally confirmed
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo) are collected from all staff and volunteers
- No person will be employed who would be deemed to constitute a risk
- Exclusions include
 - ◆ Child-related convictions
 - ◆ Refusal to sign application form and declaration form
 - ◆ Insufficient documentary evidence of identification
 - ◆ Concealing information about suitability for working with children
- There will be a six-month probationary period
- All staff will be required to consent to Garda Clearance and where available this will be sought

Staff Management Policy

To protect our staff and volunteers, and all children and vulnerable adults, we undertake that:

New staff and volunteers

- Take part in mandatory induction training sessions
- Be made aware of our code of conduct, child protection procedures and the identity and role of the designated person
- Undergo a minimum probationary period of six months

All staff and volunteers

- Receive an adequate level of supervision and review of their work practices
- Read this Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy
- All staff recruited before IWC's adoption of our Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy, will complete appropriate declaration form and Garda clearance consent forms at contract renewal and/or extension
- Undergo child protection training

Designated Liaison Person

The IWC has appointed a Designated Liaison Person for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. The Designated Liaison Person is: Orla Martin, Administrator. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is: Teerth Chung, Deputy Director.

The Designated Liaison Person will be available on-call. In the absence of the Designated Liaison Person, due to illness or holiday, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person will be on-call on the same basis. In cases where it is inappropriate for the Designated Liaison Person to investigate issues, i.e. an allegation against the Designated Liaison Person, the role of Designated Person will be taken on by the deputy, supported by the Director or Chairperson of IWC.

Role of the Designated Liaison Person

- Receives and considers all child and vulnerable adult protection concerns
- Maintains contact with appropriate authorities in Community Services, Tusla and An Garda Síochána
- Ensures IWC policy / procedures relating to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare Policy are followed
- Provides information and advice on protection and welfare at IWC
- Manages referrals to Tusla, with adequate confidential information
- Liaises with Community Services, Tusla and An Garda Síochána
- Consults with management and Chairperson of IWC with regard to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
- Ensures confidentiality / safe recording of Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection issues and of individual case histories
- Provides advice on Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Training needs
- The Designated Liaison Person will maintain his/her training and awareness of Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection issues to keep him/her updated on new developments

Mandated Persons

The IWC has appointed a Mandated Person for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. The Mandated Person is: Orla Martin, Administrator. Email info@writerscentre.ie Tel 01 8721302

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children, young people, vulnerable adults and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. Mandated persons include professionals working with children and vulnerable adults in the education, health, justice, youth and childcare sectors. Certain professionals who may not work directly with children, such as those in adult counselling or psychiatry, are also mandated persons.

The list also includes registered foster carers and members of the clergy or pastoral care workers of a church or other religious community and Child Protection Officer.

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are:

- To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla;
- To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

The mandated person, under the legislation is required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

Confidentiality Statement

The IWC is committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child and vulnerable adult protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will be forwarded on a 'need to know' basis in order to safeguard the child and vulnerable adult. Information about an incident will only be divulged if it is needed to remove the child or vulnerable adult from harm. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.
- The IWC cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult is at risk
- Primary carers, children and vulnerable adults have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to Tusla unless doing so could put the child or vulnerable at further risk

- All information relating to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection incidents will be stored appropriately and securely in the IWC offices, The Irish Writers Centre values the trust and information of all associated with the Centre. In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) our Privacy Policy can be found under the governance section of our website <https://irishwriterscentre.ie/pages/privacy-policy>

Rules to guide use of photography and video

Any recording or photography at IWC events must be undertaken with the consent of both the child, young person, vulnerable adult and their parents or guardians or primary carer.

- For events where children or vulnerable adults are attending as part of a school or other group, signed consent forms will be sought from all participants via their group leader. For example, where a class is attending an event, consent forms will be sent in advance to the group leader for distribution to parents and guardians or primary carer.
- For events where children or vulnerable adults are attending as individuals and where places are booked in advance, (parental/primary carer) consent forms will be distributed to all participants in advance.
- For events where children and vulnerable adults are attending as individuals but where places are not booked in advance, notices will be displayed at the event and at any information or ticketing stand informing participants that photographs may be taken at the event.
- Any photographer documenting events for IWC will be clearly identified to artists and event staff.
- Where a selection of participants are asked to participate in a photograph e.g. a media photocall, permission must be sought from the accompanying parent/guardian/primary carer before a child or vulnerable adult is moved to a

different location. A member of the event team must accompany the child or vulnerable adult and return them to the group as soon as photography is completed

- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, the IWC only ever use images of children and vulnerable adults in suitable dress. The content of the photograph will always focus on the activity not on a particular child or vulnerable adult.

When selecting a range of images for use for IWC promotional material (either print or web-based) for each photograph, we consider the following:

- Is the image clear? Does the image convey a message that can be clearly understood by the child? Is the photograph of sufficient quality and clarity?
- Is the image dignified? Are the subjects of the image presented in a manner in which they would wish themselves to be portrayed? Are vulnerable people presented sensitively?
- Is the image authentic? Is the photograph authentic or do you think it has been cropped or edited in a way that distorts the actual facts?
- Is the image balanced? Do the images used present a balance of ethnicities and role models, as appropriate to the setting? Do the images show the diverse realities of everyday life and challenge prevailing expectations?²

The use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person.

IWC Procedure for Reporting - Safeguarding Children

Procedure for Dealing with Concerns / Suspicion of Abuse

Staff, volunteers, interns and instructors/artists working with children, young people and vulnerable adults must share their concerns about child or vulnerable adult protection or

² Please refer to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on the Use of Images for more information: www.dochas.ie

welfare with the Designated Liaison Person or the Chairperson of the IWC. Information that staff, volunteers, interns and instructors/artists should record in relation to children and young people:

- suspicions
- concerns
- worrying observations
- behavioural changes

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The statutory authorities must be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child or young person may have been abused, is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

The following incidences constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- Specific indication from the child that she/he has been/is being abused.
- An account by a person who witnessed a child being abused.
- Evidence such as injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect/abuse.

Procedure for Dealing with a Disclosure or Allegation

It is important that allegations are handled in a sensitive, timely and discreet manner and any response to a child making an allegation should take the following into consideration:

- Actively listen to the child adult, ensuring that they feel heard.
- Inform the child of your duty to report their disclosure as early as possible in the conversation. Never agree to keep the disclosure secret.
- React calmly. Over-reaction may intimidate and increase any feelings of anxiety.
- Reassure the child that it was right to tell someone what happened.

- Be careful when asking questions. Conversation should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification. Never ask leading questions.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser to the child.

Reporting Procedure

- Record the concern, including the date, time of and people involved in the concern/disclosure and the facts in the IWC Incident Book and report directly to the Designated Liaison Person. Information recorded should be factual. Any opinions recorded should be supported by facts.
- Inform the Designated Liaison Person. or if unavailable the Deputy Designated Liaison Person.
- The most appropriate person should discuss the concern/consult with parents/carers where necessary. Parents/carers should be told of a report to Tusla unless it is likely to put the child at further risk.
- The Designated Liaison Person may contact Tusla for an informal consultation prior to making a report, Tusla – Child and Family Agency, The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. Tel 01 7718500
- The appropriate HSE department is Dublin North Child Protection Services Social Work Office, 22 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. Tel: (01) 855 6871. Office Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm
- Outside office hours all child protection concerns should be referred to the Gardaí, local contact is Store Street Gardaí Station 01 - 6668000
- The HSE operates an out-of-hours Crisis Intervention Service in the Dublin area, which can be accessed by emergency services like Hospitals and the Garda Síochána outside of office hours. Crisis Intervention Service: Office Hours Tel (01) 838 7122
- Information will be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis. If there are reasonable grounds for concern as outlined above, the Designated Liaison Person will contact Tusla. Reports to the duty social staff can be made verbally initially and then followed by the standard reporting form.
- Reports will be made to Tusla without delay. If the Designated/Deputy Liaison Person is not available then contact the local Social Staff of the Health Service Executive

directly. In emergencies which are out of Health Service Executive Social Work hours, contact the Gardaí or the Emergency Services on 112 or 999. There may be extreme situations, which threaten the immediate safety of a child where it may be necessary to contact the Gardaí.

Out-of-hours Emergencies

Any out-of-hours emergencies should be reported immediately to the Designated Liaison Person, or the Deputy Designated Liaison Person who will then decide whether to contact An Garda Síochána or Tusla where appropriate.

Concerns not requiring Tusla Referral

The Designated Liaison Person will decide whether or not to refer matters to the Tusla, recording their decision.

Any matters not referred to Tusla, should be noted within a Child Protection incident file, along with any decisions made and signed by the Designated Liaison Person and the Chairperson.

The Designated Person will inform the staff member, volunteer, intern or artist in writing of any decision not to refer to Tusla.

If any staff member, volunteer, intern or instructor/artist feels uncomfortable with a decision made in this context, they have the right and responsibility to file a report of their own.

Dealing with Allegations

In the event of an allegation against an employee/volunteer/intern/artist:

There are two separate procedures to be followed:

1. The reporting procedure in respect of the child
2. The procedure for dealing with the worker

The Designated Liaison Person will deal with issues related to the child. The Director/Chairperson will deal with issues related to the worker.

- The first priority is to ensure that no child or young person or vulnerable adult is exposed to unnecessary risk
- If allegations are made against the Designated Liaison Person then contact the Deputy Designated Liaison Person
- The reporting procedures should then be followed. Parents/carers and children (age appropriate) should be informed of actions planned and taken
- The employee/volunteer/intern/instructor/artist will be informed as soon as possible that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation
- The employee/volunteer/intern/artist should be given the opportunity to respond
- Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with Tusla and Gardaí
- After consultation, the Chairperson will advise person accused and agreed procedures will be followed.

Dealing with a Retrospective Allegation

Some adults may disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures may come to light when an adult attends counselling, or is being treated for a psychiatric or health problem.

The reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 apply only to information that the Mandated Person or Designated Liaison Person received or became aware of since the Act came into force, whether the harm occurred before or after that point. However, if there is reasonable concern about past abuse, where information came to the attention of the

Mandated Person or Designated Liaison Person, before the Act and there is a possible continuing risk to children, the concern should be reported to Tusla under this Guidance.

IWC Procedure for Reporting – Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Per the Health Service Executive’s Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, a vulnerable person is defined as:

“an adult who is restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. This may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment and risk of abuse may be influenced by both context and individual circumstances.”³

Abuse of vulnerable adults can constitute the physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time and it may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.

Key Principles in Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare

- Citizenship confers a status on an individual whereby their fundamental right to dignity and respect and other basic human rights as well as their rights to participation in society are upheld and supported by the Constitution, by Ireland’s human rights treaty commitments and by the laws of the State.
- Person-centredness is that principle which places the person as an individual at the heart and centre of any exchange requiring the provision or delivery of a service. Services are organised around what is important to the person from her/his perspective.
- Empowerment is that principle which recognises the right of the individual to lead as independent a life as possible and that supports the individual in every practical way to realise that right.

³ Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, Health Service Executive, 2014, p.5

- Self-directedness recognises the right of the individual to self-determination to the greatest extent possible, including where this entails risk. Abiding by this principle means ensuring that risks are recognised, understood and minimised as far as possible, while supporting the person to pursue their goals and preferences.
- In accordance with the principles set out in this policy, it is recognised that adults have the right to self-determination and to make decisions, even if this means that they remain at risk. Where there are concerns regarding diminished capacity, consideration should be given to requesting a specialist assessment of the person's decision-making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person.
- Equity should be applied in relation to transactions with and services to vulnerable adults. Resources and services should be provided to vulnerable people on the basis of need, using the principle of proportionality.
- Safeguarding best interest recognises the vulnerability of individuals where they are unable to make their own decisions and/or protect themselves, their assets or their bodily integrity and ensures appropriate and accountable protection for them.

Responding to and Reporting Vulnerable Adult Protection Concerns

If you are concerned about the protection or welfare of a vulnerable adult, contact the Designated Liaison Person. When the Designated Liaison Person receives a report about suspected or actual abuse, s/he will consider the wishes of the vulnerable adult and if there are reasonable grounds for reporting to the statutory authorities. This will mean:

- Clarifying or getting more information about the matter
- Consulting with the vulnerable adult as to her/his wishes, etc.
- Where there is any doubt or uncertainty, consulting the statutory authorities to obtain their advice about the situation
- Where there are concerns about the diminished capacity of the vulnerable adult, considering
- assessment of decision-making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person
- Making a formal referral to the statutory authorities

A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. These suspicions, however, will be recorded or noted internally by the Designated Liaison Person as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for the statutory authorities. A full written record of all decisions will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person.

In an emergency, where a person is at immediate risk, contact An Garda Síochana or the Emergency Services on 112 or 999.

Confidentiality

All information concerned with the identification and reporting of vulnerable adult abuse is subject to best practice guidance on confidentiality. Where a vulnerable adult has capacity, their consent should be sought prior to disclosing information to other parties or the statutory authorities.

Mandatory Reporting

It is a legal requirement throughout Ireland for any person who knows or believes that a serious offence has been committed, including an offence relating to rape, sexual assault or false imprisonment, to report such information to An Garda Síochana and it is an offence not to do so where that failure cannot be reasonably excused.

Consent

The consent of the vulnerable adult should be sought prior to reporting any matter to the statutory authorities and on to family and care service providers. Sometimes adults do not want civil authorities to take action to investigate or protect them from harm. If upon receipt of the concern, where the vulnerable adult does not give consent to reporting, and it is not clear that a criminal act has taken place, and where the Designated Liaison Person believes that others may also be at risk of harm, consultation should take place with civil authorities as to the best course of action in the absence of consent.

In considering the capacity of the vulnerable adult to give consent, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The adult has capacity to understand what is being asked of him or her

- Sufficient information is given, in a way that the person understands, to enable him/her to make an informed decision
- Consent is not received through any form of coercion

If the vulnerable adult is unable to give informed consent, discussions should take place with their carer/guardian/close family member about reporting concerns/allegations and, where appropriate, discussions should also take place with any medical or social work personnel. There may need to be a determination as to who can give consent on behalf of the vulnerable adult. In some cases, there may already be provision in place; consultation may be required with legal advisers and statutory authorities.

Please note that the Designated Liaison Person should not make determinations around capacity to give consent without consultation with appropriately trained and skilled personnel.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a complaint or comment from a participating child, young person or vulnerable adult, or their parent/carer/guardian:

- Complaints and comments will be logged in the incident book, which is stored in a locked cabinet at the Administrator's desk, in accordance with GDPR policy.
- Reports of complaints will include contact details of the person making the complaint, an outline of the complaint as well as details of the response of staff members present.
- Complaints will be responded to within three days
- All staff members have responsibility for directing complaints/comments to the Designated Liaison Person
- Verbal complaints will be responded to at the time of complaint and all details will be logged in the incident book
- Anyone who makes a verbal complaint will be encouraged to submit details of their complaint in writing also.

Accidents Procedure

- Any accidents which take place but must be fully logged in the IWC's incident book, including a full report of the circumstances
- The IWC's first-aid boxes are available at the main office, above the Administrator's desk and regularly restocked
- The accident/incident books are stored in a locked cabinet as per GDPR policy, in a locked cabinet at the Administrators desk
- Staff should ensure children and vulnerable adults are aware of risks of dangerous material in relation to workshops and other appropriate events
- Details of the IWC's public liability insurance will be made available to venues for IWC's events.

Appendix 1.a IWC Child Incident Report Form

IWC Incident Record Form CONFIDENTIAL

Your name: _____ Your position: _____
Child's name (Initials): _____ Child's date of birth: _____
Parents / guardians names: _____
Child's home address (and phone number, if available): _____

What prompted your concerns (include date and time of any incident, also any physical and behavioural signs you have observed):

Have you spoken to the child about this? As best you can, record exactly what the child said and what you said: (remember, do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Action taken so far: Have parents been contacted? (if unsure contact an agency – see below) What has been said?

External agencies contacted (date & time)

Yes/no

Gardaí / I If 'yes'

Name, unit and contact number: Details of advice received:

Tusla/Health Services Executive/Social Worker yes/ no

If 'yes' which service? Name and contact number: Details of advice received:

Which: Name and contact number:

Signature: _____ Print name: _____ Date: _____

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis. Information about an incident should only be divulged if it is needed to remove the child from harm. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know. If unsure get advice before contacting child's parents.

NB: A copy of this form should be sent to Tusla after the telephone report with the original going to the IWC Child Protection Officer who will keep it in a designated locked drawer.

Appendix 1.b IWC Incident Report Form

IWC Incident Record Form CONFIDENTIAL

Your name:

Your position: Name (Initials):

Home address (and phone number, if available):

What prompted your concerns (include date and time of any incident, also any physical and behavioural signs you have observed):

What has been said:

Action taken so far:

External agencies contacted (date & time)

Yes/no Gardaí / I If 'yes' Name, unit and contact number: Details of advice received:

Tusla/HSE/Social Worker yes/ no

Other (e.g. ISPCC, NSPCC)

If 'yes' which service? Name and contact number: Details of advice received:

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis. Information about an incident should only be divulged if it is needed to remove the child from harm. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

NB: A copy of this form should be sent to Tusla, if related to child or young person, after the telephone report with the original going to the IWC Child Protection Officer who will keep it in a designated locked drawer.

Appendix Two – IWC Volunteer, Staff, Intern, Instructor Declaration

CONFIDENTIAL

1. IWC Volunteer Application Form

1. Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms) _____

Other surname previously known by: _____

2. Address

Previous addresses within last 5 years:

i)

ii)

iii)

Tel No. (Daytime) _____ (Evening) _____

3. Date of Birth ____/____/____ Place of Birth _____

4. PPS number (ROI) _____

5. Do you suffer from any illness/disability/medical condition which may at times affect your ability to work with children and young people? If so, please give details:

6. Please supply the name, address, telephone numbers and position of two people (nonrelative), who know you well and can provide us with a reference.

7. You must tell us now if you have a case pending or if you have ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or cautioned by the police, or bound over. You must include all offences, even minor matters such as motoring offences, and spent conviction, that is, things which happened a long time ago. If you leave anything out it may affect your application. The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not debar you from registration/appointment unless IWC considers that the conviction renders you unsuitable. In making this decision IWC will consider the nature of the offence, how long ago it was committed and what age you were at the time and other factors which may be relevant.

Please complete below to give us this information and return it with your application.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?

Yes / No If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Please note you are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order (NI) 1987 you should declare all convictions including spent convictions.

8. I declare that the above information is true and agree that I will abide and accept the terms and conditions of membership / participation.

Signed _____ Date: _____

Depending on the nature of your volunteer position, it is our policy to ask for a check to be carried out by the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (N.I.) or to the Garda Central Vetting Unit. The purpose of the check is to make sure that people are not appointed who might be a risk to vulnerable people. The Check will tell us whether you have a criminal record, or whether the DHSS& PS holds any other information about you which might have a bearing on your suitability. Any information which we receive will be treated confidentially, and will be discussed with you before we make a final decision. After that decision is made the information will be destroyed.

I understand that a Pre-Employment Constancy service check/Garda Vetting may be carried out before my application for registration/appointment can be confirmed.

Appendix Three – IWC Parental Consent Form

IWC Parental Consent Form

The **Irish Writers Centre** is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children and young people*. It is central to the philosophy of the Irish Writers Centre to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. We will adhere to the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and the Children First Act 2015.

In consideration of the Irish Writers Centre registering my child for Irish Writers Centre activities or classes, I acknowledge and agree to the following policies, waiver, and release of liability:

1.) Drop-off and Pick-up. Please be sure to arrive to drop off and pick-up your child within 15 minutes of the stated start and finish times of the class or activity. The name of the parent(s) or guardian(s) listed below will be the designated drop-off and pick-up person for the duration of the class, course, or activity.

If you need to arrange for someone other than the registered parent or guardian to pick up your child, please send a note to class or send an email to info@writerscentre.ie with the full name and phone number of the person who will be picking up your child that day.

Please note that all children under seven years of age must be accompanied to IWC events by a parent or carer (events or courses online or in our building)

2) Photo Release. From time to time Irish Writers Centre staff will take photos of the Irish Writers Centre classes and/or activities. These photos may be posted to our website or social media pages. I understand that I have the right to request that my child not be photographed and must inform the Irish Writers Centre of my wishes in regards to my child's participation in photography. Please send an email to info@writerscentre.ie if you would like your child to be excluded from photography.

3.) Behavioural Problems. I understand that if my child is continually disruptive, is physically or verbally abusive toward the instructor or other students, or exhibits other ongoing behavioural problems during the class, that I will be notified by phone call to come pick-up my child immediately and may not receive any refund of tuition.

4.) I knowingly and freely assume all such risks, both known and unknown, and assume full responsibility for my child's participation in Irish Writers Centre classes and activities. I acknowledge that my child does not have any allergies or health conditions that would prevent him or her from participating in the Irish Writers Centre activities.

Request for consent

I agree that my child may take part inat the Irish Writers Centre.

- YES / NO

I agree that photographs/recordings of my child may be taken when he/she is attending classes/courses at the Irish Writers Centre.

- YES / NO

I agree that the images may be used by the Irish Writers Centre in its publications/website/social media without using my child's personal details.

- YES / NO

I agree acknowledge that the Irish Writers Centre has implemented procedures for sign-in and sign-out of children attending Irish Writers Centre classes and activities to help ensure the children's safety both when arriving and departing the Centre. Children may not be signed in until 15 minutes before the beginning of class and must be picked up as promptly as possible or within 15 minutes of the end of the class. (If you need an early sign-in or late sign-out please request in advance to info@writerscentre.ie and we will do what we can to accommodate you.)

- YES / NO

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

References

Child Care Act 1991

Criminal Justice Act 2006

Children First Act 2015

Children First National Guidance for Child Protection and Welfare 2017

Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

https://www.dochas.ie/sites/default/files/Images_and_Messages.pdf

National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016

Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse (HSE)

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/personsatriskofabuse.pdf>

Tusla, 'Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement'

Tusla, Child Safeguarding; Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice

Tusla, 'A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns'

Tusla, 'Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes'

Tusla, e-learning module, Introduction to Children First

Updated 3rd Jan 2023